

RESPITE TIP



ACCESSIBLE NOVA SCOTIA VACATION IDEAS

Are you planning a summer vacation in Nova Scotia? Families traveling with a child/adult with special needs may have to do some extra planning. Here are some ideas for you to think about:

Where do I look for accommodations and activities?

There are accessible vacation spots in Nova Scotia. An excellent resource is the Canadian Paraplegic Association's Accessibility Index: <http://www.thespine.co/resources/accessibility-index/> which lets you select the category (e.g., accessible camping) and the Nov Scotia location. If there are accessible choices in the database, they will be displayed. When you look at Accommodations, for example, there will be a description of the accessible services provided for the location you specified.

Another good link on the site is the *Where to Turn* page <http://www.thespine.co/resources/> which lists resources in many categories including, *Sports and Leisure* and *Transportation and Travel*. Be sure to explore the website carefully, there is lots of information which may be helpful to you.

The next website is http://access-able.com/graphical_index.html. It provides information on disabled travel and activities worldwide. Although most of the information is American, you can search for Nova Scotia and find information on accommodations, things to do and see, accessible museums, amusement parks, etc. Select "Nova Scotia" from the drop-down menu near the top of this page: <http://www.access-able.com/dBase/search-north-america.cfm>.

Check out Mersey River Chalets for a family stay. The accommodations and activities are designed to be fully accessible. The developers wanted to create a place with limited barriers. Mersey River offers a wheelchair swing, wide nature trails and a dock to allow access to swimming and boating. For more information, see: <http://www.merseyriverchalets.ns.ca/accessibility.html>

Fun things to do in Nova Scotia

There are many things to do in Nova Scotia during the summer. Some of these are fully accessible, some have limited accessibility, and some are not accessible at all. If you are interested in exploring some of the attractions in Nova Scotia, it is important to check ahead of time and see if the site is accessible for your family. For example, to get in to Fortress Louisbourg, everyone leaves their car in a parking lot and boards a special bus. The bus is handicap accessible, but may not meet the needs of your family. You can contact the office before you arrive, and receive permission to drive your own vehicle to the site. The Fortress site itself has limited accessibility. Information can be found at: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/ns/louisbourg/visit/acces.aspx> .

For information on:

- **Museums:** <http://www.novascotia.com/see-do/attractions/museums>
- **Upper Clements Amusement Park:** <http://www.upperclementsparks.com/>
- **Sailing:** <http://www.sailnovascotia.ca/programs/able-sail-programs.html>
- **Hiking Trails:** <http://www.trails.gov.ns.ca/>
- **Paddling:** <http://www.adckc.ca/Programs/Paddle-ALL/>

Public Transportation

You have chosen a place to go, but wonder how you will get around once you're there. Check these websites; they will direct you to information about the different transportation options available in different Nova Scotia communities.

<http://www.accesstotravel.gc.ca/8.aspx?lang=en> : Choose Nova Scotia and a list of different communities will come up. Click on the community you plan to visit and you will find contact information, as well as a brief description of the transportation offered.

In the Halifax Regional Municipality: Halifax Transit has some routes equipped with Accessible Low Floor (ALF) buses. These buses have no steps, and the bus floor can be lowered to the curb level. The doors are extra wide and there are 2 wheelchair tie downs to secure the chair from movement during the bus ride. There are restrictions on the size of the wheelchairs, and not all chairs can be accommodated. For more information click on <http://www.halifax.ca/Accessibility/AccessibleTransportationServices.php>

Happy planning!

This Respite Tip has been brought to you by the Nova Scotia Partnership on Respite, Family Health, and Well-Being. Information on the Respite Partnership and this and other Respite Tips can be found at: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/nova-scotia-respite-partnership>

Respite, WE deserve it!



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